Poisoning of tigers

15. SHRI RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that two Royal Bengal tigers were poisoned in October last by the villagers near Orang National Park in Darang district of Assam;

(b) if so, whether the aspect of the villagers sneaking into the protected forest area has been inquired into; and

(c) if so, the findings thereof and the action taken/proposed to be taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI S. REGUPATHY): (a) to (c) As reported by the State, the patrolling staff of Orang National Park had reported mortality of two tigers on 2.10.2007 and 4.10.2007, regarding which action has been taken for further investigation by the concerned State authorities.

Noise levels of crackers

16. SHRI MAHENDRA MOHAN: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether is it a fact that manufacturers of crackers are required by law to print the noise level on the boxes of crackers being sold in the market;

(b) whether is it also a fact that 90 per cent crackers fail to clear prescribed noise level norms;

(c) if so, the action that has been taken by Government against cracker manufacturers and how many have been charged under the law;

(d) whether Central Pollution Control Board has conducted any enquiry into the matter and any raids conducted; and

(e) the steps Government have taken to reduce noise and air pollution during festive seasons like Diwali?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) to (d) The Ministry of Environment and Forests has notified the noise levels for firecrackers in October, 1999 under the Environment (Protection) Rules, 1986. As per information provided by the Central Pollution Control Board, the testing results of the samples of firecrackers tested during last three years have indicated about 75% having failed to comply with the prescribed noise levels. With respect to the firecrackers, the Hon'ble Supreme Court, in its Order of July 2005, in the matter of Noise Pollution has, *inter alia*, observed that between the present system of evaluating firecrackers on the basis of noise levels, and the other where the firecrackers are evaluated on the basis of chemical composition, the later method is more practical and workable in Indian circumstances and it shall be followed unless and until replaced by a better system. Further, that the Department of Explosives shall undertake necessary research activities for the purpose and come out with the chemical formulae for each type of cracker or class of firecrackers. It is also mentioned in the Hon'ble Supreme Court Order that every manufacturer shall, on the box of each firecracker, mention details of its chemical contents and that it satisfies the requirement as laid down by the Department of Explosives.

In pursuance to the aforesaid Order of the Hon'ble Supreme Court, the Petroleum and Explosives Safety Organisation (Formerly-Department of Explosives) has already initiated a study to decide on the chemical composition of fire crackers to comply with noise standards.

(e) The steps taken for control of noise pollution include the following:.

- Noise standards have been notified in October 1999.
- Regular compliance monitoring is undertaken by the implementing agencies.
- Ministry of Environment and Forests has advised State Governments and UT Administrations to prepare action plan to control and monitor the noise pollution regularly, particularly during festive seasons including Diwali.

Death of leopards

17. SHRI RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that in 100 days from June 1, 2007 to September 10, 2007, 14 leopards died in various parts of the country for various reasons, thereby endangering the species;

(b) if so, the number of leopards presently living in the country (as on 31.10.07) as compared to their number of 8203, according to the census in 2001-02; and

(c) the steps being taken by Government to protect the animal from extinction?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI S. REGUPATHY): (a) As per the information received from the State/UT Governments, there are reports of death of leopards due to various reasons in different parts of the country.

(b) No population estimation of leopards is available after 2001-02 for comparison.

(c) The measures taken by Government of India to ensure protection of leopards, *inter alia,* include the following:

1. Leopard has been included in the Schedule I of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, thus according them the highest degree of protection.
2. A network of National Parks and Wildlife Sanctuaries has been set up across the country to protect wildlife including leopards.
3. Wildlife Crime Control Bureau, with a network of five Regional and three Sub Regional Offices, has been set up to control wildlife crimes.
4. Financial support is being provided under the Centrally Sponsored Schemes- *Development of National Parks and Sanctuaries, Project Tiger* and *Project Elephant,* to State/UT Governments for the conservation and development of wildlife and its habitats.
5. India is a signatory to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) that regulates international trade in wildlife and its derivatives.

In addition, the State/UT Governments have also taken the following measures to protect wild animals including leopards:

1. Development of wildlife habitat to increase the population of wild animals.
2. Intensive patrolling in sensitive areas.
3. Deployment of Ex-service men for patrolling.